

March 22, 1995

PUBLIC HEARING HELD

Present: (15) Representatives Brancel, Foti, Schneiders, Ourada, Porter, Linton, and Coggs, and Senators Leean, Weeden, Farrow, Schultz, Cowles, Panzer, George and Chvala.

Absent: (1) Representative Harsdorf.

Appearances For the Bill

COST CONTAINMENT COMMISSION

► Mr. Mike Corry, Chair, Cost Containment Commission - Madison.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

► Mr. Richard Lorang, Acting Secretary, Department of Health and Social Services - Madison; Mr. Gene Kussart, Deputy Director, Department of Health and Social Services - Madison.

OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

► Honorable Scott McCallum, Lieutenant Governor, Office of the Lieutenant Governor - Madison.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

► Mr. Michael J. Sullivan, Secretary, Department of Corrections - Madison.

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, LABOR AND HUMAN RELATIONS

► Ms. Carol Skornicka, Secretary, Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations - Madison; Pat Osborne, Deputy Secretary, Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations - Madison.

INVESTMENT BOARD

► Mr. Philip Gelatt, Chairperson, Investment Board - Madison; Ms. Patricia Lipton, Executive Director, Investment Board - Madison.

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT

► Mr. William J. McCoshen, Secretary, Department of Development - Madison; Mr. Moose Speros, Division Administrator, Department of Development - Madison.

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

► Mr. Herb Behnke, Chair, Natural Resources Board - Madison; Mr. George Meyer, Secretary, Department of Natural Resources - Madison.

CLEAN WATER FUND

► Mr. George Meyer, Secretary, Department of

Natural Resources - Madison; Mr. Michael Wolff, Administrator, Clean Water Fund - Madison; Ms. Kathryn A. Curtner, Department of Natural Resources - Madison.

LOWER WISCONSIN STATE RIVERWAY BOARD

► Mr. Mark E. Cupp, Executive Director, Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board - Muscoda; Mr. James H. Amundson, Board Member, Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Board.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

► Mr. Alan Tracy, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection - Madison; Mr. James Harsdorf, President, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Board - Beldenville; Ms. Elizabeth Kohl, Deputy Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection - Madison.

STATE FAIR PARK BOARD

► Mr. Michael T. Hunter, Chairperson, State Fair Park Board - Antigo; Mr. Richard Bjorklund, Director, State Fair Park - West Allis.

Appearances Against the Bill

BOARD ON AGING AND LONG-TERM CARE

► Ms. Louise Abrahams Yaffe, Chair, Board on Aging and Long-Term Care - Milwaukee; Mr. George Potaracke, Executive Director, Board on Aging and Long-Term Care - Madison.

Appearances for Information Only

ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY PREVENTION & SERVICES BOARD

► Ms. Dana Alder, Administrator, Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention & Services Board - Madison.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION BOARD

► Ms. Jude Morse, Executive Director, Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board - Madison; Ms. Carol Latham, Chairperson, Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board - Madison.

WISCONSIN CONSERVATION CORPS

► Mr. Randall J. Radtke, Executive Director, Wisconsin Conservation Corps - Madison; Mr. Jerry Schuster, Chairman, Wisconsin Conservation Corps.

Registrations For the Bill

► Matt Hansen, Madison; Paul H. Kusuda, AARP, Madison; Terry W. Grosenheider, Department of

Development, Madison.

Registrations Against the Bill

► Barbara Bryant, Homecraft, Madison; Ellen Rabenhorst, AARP, Madison; Paul H. Kusuda, AARP, Madison; Brenda Greehling, Self, Madison; Tom Frazier, Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups, Madison; Edward M. Heinz, Homecraft, Watertown; Matt Hansen, Self, Madison; Jeanne Kilbane, AARP, Minocqua; Helen DeBardelbeu, Self, Madison; David Stucki, Self, Madison.

March 28, 1995

PUBLIC HEARING HELD

Present: (16) Representatives Brancel, Foti, Schneiders, Ourada, Harsdorf, Porter, Linton, and Coggs, and Senators Leeann, Weeden, Farrow, Schultz, Cowles, Panzer, George and Chvala.

Absent: (0) None.

Appearances For the Bill

HIGHER EDUCATIONAL AIDS BOARD

Ms. Valorie T. Olson, Executive Secretary,
Higher Educational Aids Board - Madison.

WISCONSIN ETHICS BOARD

Mr. James R. Morgan, President, Wisconsin Ethics Board - Madison; Mr. R. Roth Judd, Executive Director, Wisconsin Ethics Board - Madison.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN

Ms. Cheryl Parrino, Chairperson, Public Service Commission of Wisconsin - Madison.

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE

Ms. Josephine W. Musser, Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner of Insurance - Madison; Ms. Clare Stapleton Concord, Office of the Commissioner of Insurance - Madison.

PERSONNEL COMMISSION

Ms. Laurie R. McCallum, Chairperson, Personnel Commission - Madison.

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS COMMISSION

Mr. A. Henry Hempe, Chairman, Employment Relations Commission - Madison; Mr. Herman Torosir, Employment Relations Commission - Madison.

LABOR AND INDUSTRY REVIEW COMMISSION

Ms. Pamela Anderson, Chairperson, Labor and Industry Review Commission - Madison.

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

Mr. Jon E. Litscher, Secretary, Department of Employment Relations - Madison.

MINNESOTA-WISCONSIN BOUNDARY AREA COMMISSION
Mr. Dan McGuiness, Administrative Director,
Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission -
Hudson; Mr. Harold Craig, Chair of
Admin/Finance, Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area
Commission - LaCrosse; Mr. James Harrison,
Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission -
Hudson.

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS
Major General Jerald Slack, Adjutant General,
Department of Military Affairs - Madison; Mr.
Lee Conner, Administrator, Division of Emergency
Government, Department of Military Affairs -
Madison.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Mr. Raymond G. Boland, Secretary, Department of
Veterans Affairs - Madison; Mr. Richard E.
Marbes, President, Board of Veterans Affairs -
Green Bay.

Appearances Against the Bill

Appearances for Information Only

WISCONSIN ARTS BOARD
Ms. Gloria Kirking, Wisconsin Arts Board -
Portage; Mr. Dean Amhaus, Executive Director,
Wisconsin Arts Board - Madison.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Mr. H. Nicholas Muller, III, Director,
Historical Society - Madison.

EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS BOARD
Ms. Sally Builder, Chair, Educational
Communications Board - Madison; Mr. Glenn A.
Davison, Executive Director - Madison.

WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM
Mr. Dwight York, State Director, Wisconsin
Technical College System - Madison; Mr. Allen
Schraufnagel, President, Wisconsin Technical
College System - Madison.

EDUCATIONAL APPROVAL BOARD
Ms. Marion J. Swoboda, Chair, Education Approval
Board - Madison; Mr. Joseph L. Davis, Executive
Secretary, Educational Approval Board - Madison.

ELECTIONS BOARD

Mr. Kevin J. Kennedy, Executive Director,
Elections Board - Madison; Mr. J. Curtis McKay,
Chairperson, Elections Board - Madison.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Honorable Douglas LaFollette, Secretary of
State, Office of the Secretary of State -
Madison.

Registrations For the Bill



**Testimony of the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board
to the Joint Committee on Finance
regarding
1995 Assembly Bill 150,
the 1995-97 Biennial Budget**

Senator Leean, Representative Brancel, and members of the Committee, good morning, and thank you for this opportunity to present written and oral testimony on the biennial budget initiatives affecting the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board. I am Glenn Davison, the Executive Director of the Board, and this is Sally Bilder, Chairperson of the Board. We have included an overview of the agency in our written testimony, as well as the Board's position in response to the specific budget initiatives. In our oral testimony, we will highlight key points related to the agency's services, and provide comment on the budget initiatives.

Agency Creation, Governance and Budget

The Wisconsin Educational Communications Board was created by state statute in 1971 to oversee the development and the operation of statewide radio and television public broadcasting networks. Since that time, its statutory responsibilities have expanded to include statewide leadership in the development of regional educational telecommunications networks by securing funding for these networks, coordinating their development, and establishing technical standards to ensure their interconnectivity and interoperability.

The Board which governs the agency broadly represents the publics served by the agency. The 16 board members include: the Secretary of the Department of Administration, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the President of the University of Wisconsin System, and the Director of the Technical College System; four legislators, representing the majority and minority of each house; and appointee of the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System; an appointee of the Wisconsin Technical College System Board; one representative of public schools and one representative of private schools, and two public members, each appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate; and the chairpersons of the Council on Public Radio and the Council on Public Television.

The WECB has a staff of 103 full time employees and an annual budget of \$13.4 million. A diversified funding base (56% state support, 22% private contributions, 15% community service grants and federal support, and 7% other revenues) makes possible an array of services benefiting the state's citizens.

Agency Role in Instructional Services

Instructional services of the agency include instructional television and radio programming for K-12 and higher education, instructional program development and research, instructional broadcast utilization, and field services. Programming for the K-12 schools was used by 33,000 teachers in the 1993-94 school year, providing learning opportunities for over 540,000 students. The agency's engineering staff also maintains the 17 Instructional Television Fixed Service systems which are operated by local educational institutions for distance education programming.

The WECB also facilitates the development of in-service programs for educators and educational administrators, making them available via video conference, satellite distribution and, more recently, on-line services. For example, in partnership with PBS, the agency is participating in Mathline, a project which provides middle school mathematics teachers with training consistent with national standards via video conference and computer links. Learning Link Wisconsin is an interactive computer system which allows educators throughout the state to access discussion forums and bulletin boards on a variety of subject areas.

Agency Role in Distance Education Services

The WECB is charged by statute to coordinate the development of regional telecommunications networks maintained by local educational institutions, establish technical standards for these networks and their interconnections, and provide leadership in securing appropriate funding for these networks. To execute that charge, the WECB has facilitated the development of distance learning systems which use a variety of technologies, and has provided both programming and technical assistance to consortia formed to ensure the efficient use of the technologies. The WECB recently approved funding of the first Distance Education Project Grants, a competitive program established by the Legislature within the WECB to promote the development, construction, and operation of distance education projects.

The Distance Education Technologies Interagency Collaboration group is advisory to the WECB, and is appointed by its Executive Director. This group identifies and disseminates regulatory, technical and policy information to users of distance education technologies, serves as a forum for discussion of statewide distance education priorities, and proposes and implements plans to ensure equal access to education for all state residents through the use of telecommunications technologies.

Agency Role in Wisconsin Public Radio and Television

The WECB plans, constructs, and operates the state's public radio and television networks. It is the licensee for 10 public radio and 5 public television stations, providing statewide broadcast coverage. The Board shares responsibility for public broadcasting with the University of Wisconsin System and the broadcast stations licensed to the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents. The Board is also affiliated with public television stations licensed to Milwaukee Area Technical College, public broadcasting station WSDE in Duluth, Minnesota, and several public radio stations not licensed to either the WECB or the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents.

The WECB, the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents, and FCC broadcast license rules and regulations govern programming policy. Radio and television programming is acquired from national, regional, and local sources. Programming is also produced at University of Wisconsin System facilities in Madison, Green Bay, Menomonie, and at the Milwaukee Area Technical College station WMVT-TV. The Telecommunications Operations Center, located at the WECB offices in Madison distributes the broadcast signals statewide via a leased microwave network to transmitters located throughout the state. The networks serve over 1,000,000 television viewers and 280,000 radio listeners during an average week. In addition, teachers and students utilize the WECB instructional programming over the same networks.

Agency Role in Engineering and Delivery Services

The WECB engineering and delivery services staff plan, develop, operate and maintain all WECB telecommunication facilities that deliver instructional and public programming, data and other telecommunications services to the residents and educational institutions of Wisconsin. Through its delivery systems, the WECB provides technical facilities including television and radio transmitters, 10 National Weather Service transmitters, translators which extend broadcast coverage, interconnect systems, and other related technical systems for the state radio and television networks. Network head-end equipment and satellite transmit and receive facilities are operated in Madison.

Thirty towers, ranging in height from 50 to 1,600 feet, hold delivery equipment for which the WECB is responsible to FCC licensure requirements. To deliver the programming of Wisconsin Public Television, the WECB operates five transmission facilities in the areas of Green Bay, Park Falls, Wausau, Eau Claire, and La Crosse; and five low-power UHF translators; and, interconnection services to affiliate stations in Superior, Madison, and Milwaukee. Wisconsin Public Radio programming is delivered over one AM transmitter in Auburndale and nine FM transmitters located in Madison, Highland, Delafield, Green Bay, Wausau, Menomonie, La Crosse, Park Falls, and Brule; the WECB provides two network services to these and other affiliated stations, including local programming origination from Milwaukee, Green Bay, and Eau Claire.

WECB Response to Specific Budget Initiatives

The standard budget adjustments included in the budget proposal are supported by the WECB and will be incorporated in the agency's operations.

The WECB also supports the efficiency measures specific to the agency which are in the budget. The measures in the budget mirror the 5% and 10% reductions to the agency's GPR budget that the Board approved in November. These efficiencies include: reductions in engineering and delivery services totaling \$725,000 and 9.0 FTE positions; programming support reductions totaling \$164,700 and 3.5 FTE positions; administrative reductions totaling \$44,600 and 0.5 FTE positions; and an estimated utilities reduction of \$66,500.

The WECB requested authority to enter into contracts with state agencies and local governmental units to furnish engineering and other services related to constructing or operating telecommunications facilities. The WECB also requested that the agency be able to receive revenues from these contractual services and place them in PR appropriations. Although the budget proposal approves this authority, it also transfers the authority to the Department of Administration.

The budget proposal contains a number of initiatives affecting all executive branch agencies, including the WECB. The WECB supports the initiatives which:

- permit DOA to begin charging agencies for interagency mail delivery service;
- direct DOA to consolidate capital planning and building construction functions;
- direct DOA to require each state agency to adopt, revise, and submit for approval to DOA a strategic Information Technology plan; and
- direct DOA to consolidate document production, reproduction, and distribution of all executive branch agencies within the DOA.

The WECB did not support the budget proposal which would consolidate the functions of all state agencies relating to the implementation, support and management of Information Technology at DOA.

Finally, the WECB deliberated with particular concern both the proposed broadcast and narrowcast co-licensure of the Department of Administration with the WECB and the proposed transfer of engineering and delivery services and personnel to the Department of Administration. These engineering services ensure the delivery of the instructional and public programming provided by the WECB. In a split vote, the WECB did not support the co-licensure, transfer of the assets and liabilities associated with engineering and delivery services, and the transfer of the engineering staff, as proposed in the biennial budget.

Four areas of concern were articulated during the Board's deliberations. Consistent with the split vote on this proposal, there was not a consensus on these concerns. To better inform the Committee of the Board's deliberations, those concerns follow.

- First, the programming and editorial integrity of Wisconsin Public Radio and Television must be maintained.
- Second, numerous Federal Communications Commission related questions concerning the proposed broadcast and narrowcast co-licensing of the Department of Administration with the WECB and (by agreement) with the University of Wisconsin, and the transfer of engineering equipment remain unresolved and cannot be resolved by the time the Joint Committee on Finance concludes its work.
- Third, the cost benefits of the transfer of the engineering and delivery services have not been demonstrated and the current efficiencies and effectiveness of engineering and delivery services must not be jeopardized.
- Fourth, and finally, concerns were expressed over whether the transfer of the engineering equipment and personnel were in the best interests of continuing to provide high quality public broadcast programming for the state.



WISCONSIN EDUCATIONAL
COMMUNICATIONS BOARD

*Basic to our state's progress in
economic development*

*Critical to the advancement of
new generations of learners*

*Vital to personal enrichment
and quality of life*

*Essential to the development of
teaching and lifelong learning
in Wisconsin*

The Wisconsin Educational Communications Board (ECB) produces and delivers curriculum-based audio and video programs, accompanied by print and computer materials for Wisconsin learners of all ages.

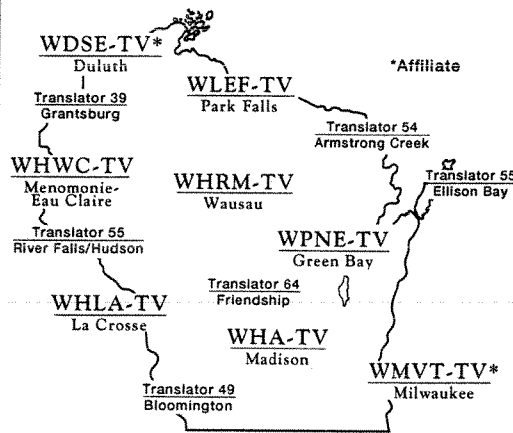
The ECB's partners in production, acquisition, and delivery of programming include:

- K-12 schools
- cooperative educational service agencies
- the state Department of Public Instruction
- the University of Wisconsin
- the Wisconsin Technical College System

Funding for instructional programming is provided by:

- \$830,000 in program revenues
- \$1.48 million in general purpose revenues, appropriated by the Wisconsin Legislature
- \$213,000 in federal funds, including support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting

Instructional Programming Services



Wisconsin Public Television stations, affiliates, and translators

Services include:

Instructional Television

K-12

- 900 hours broadcast yearly for K-12 classrooms statewide
- 1,400 programs in 16 curricular areas
- 111 series used by 33,000 Wisconsin public school teachers
- Reaches 540,000 public school students annually

Adult Learning

- 40 adult learning telecourses broadcast each year
- Course topics from infant/child care to GED to mathematics and the sciences
- University or technical college credit provided
- Annual enrollment of 5,800

ECB On-line Services

Learning Link™ Wisconsin

- Computer service for exchange of educational ideas and information
- 300 users log in daily
- Features 45 custom-designed discussion forums

- Provides access to Internet E-mail and mailing lists
- Contains databases, including Curriculum ConnectionSM

MATHLINE

- Professional development for mathematics teachers of grades 5 through 8
- Supports standards-based curriculum practices
- Helps teachers enable students to succeed in applying mathematics in the workplace and in daily life
- The 1994-95 demonstration year is engaging 64 teachers in structured, on-line dialogue more than 1,400 times monthly

Outreach

- Live videoconferences via satellite
- Satellite resource programs
- PBS VIDEO for libraries
- Distance Teaching and Learning Conference
- Wisconsin Educational Technology Conference
- Publications:
Parade of Programs, 55,000 yearly;
Interconnect, 45,000 monthly;
Telelink, 1,300 bimonthly;
and Grants Alert, periodically

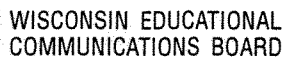
Current Programming Projects

Instructional Television

- "Exploring Wisconsin Our Home"
- "Interactions in Science and Society"
- "Workplace Economics"
- "Teaching Early Literacy"
- "Mathematics Is Elementary"

Professional Development Topics (Live, interactive teleworkshop series via satellite)

- School-to-work
- Connecting the curriculum
- Multicultural literacy



Provides leadership in securing appropriate funding for these networks

- cooperative educational service agencies
- the state Department of Administration
- the state Department of Public Instruction
- the University of Wisconsin
- the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
- the Wisconsin Technical College System

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In 1993, consultants under contract with the ECB completed a study designed to assist the educational institutions of the state in formulating strategic directions for the development of distance education technologies. Following that baseline study, the ECB has engaged in several key activities.

- Functions to advise the ECB, with membership appointed by the Executive Director to represent educational institutions and interests statewide
- Serves as a forum for the discussion and implementation of statewide distance education strategies to ensure equal access to education for all Wisconsin residents
- Disseminates regulatory, technical, and policy information

- Promotes common technical standards to ensure regional network interconnectivity
- Conducts technology demonstrations and tests
- Creates guidelines for system development

- A cooperative effort by the ECB and University of Wisconsin-Extension to develop community information networks throughout Wisconsin
- The networks will provide a “virtual location” for community, educational, and government information
- Information access will include voice response, fax-back, computer bulletin boards, audio conferencing, and access to the information superhighway

- Technical and programmatic consulting services to assist in the development of regional networks
- Assists in needs assessment, technical design, government issues, and funding strategies

- The ECB awarded \$107,130 to educational institutions in 1994 for the advancement of 12 regional distance education projects
- Eligible applications for funding exceeded \$400,000



WISCONSIN EDUCATIONAL
COMMUNICATIONS BOARD

Wisconsin Public Radio

- 280,000 listeners during an average week
- 36,000 contributors
- \$1.8 million in membership support

In addition, WPR received in 1994:

- \$395,000 in underwriting income for state programming
- future bequests of support from 50 individuals

Wisconsin Public Television

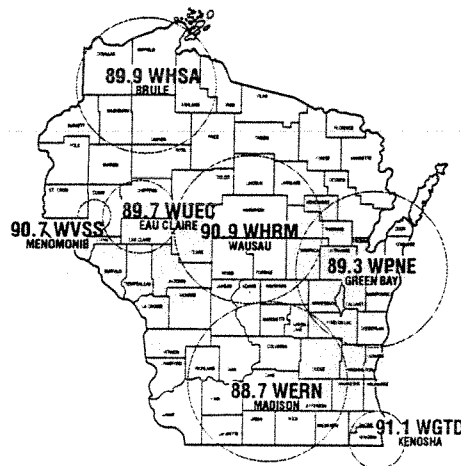
- More than 1 million viewers during an average week
- 52,000 household memberships
- \$2.9 million in membership support

In addition, WPT received in 1994:

- \$1 million in support from 206 corporations and foundations
- 90 major gifts of \$1,000 or more
- \$417,000 in support from the Auction held in Madison
- \$16,000 in support through special events and gifts
- future bequests of support from 100 individuals, and 900 others have requested information on how they can support Wisconsin Public Broadcasting with future bequests

Wisconsin Public Broadcasting Audience and Public Support Information

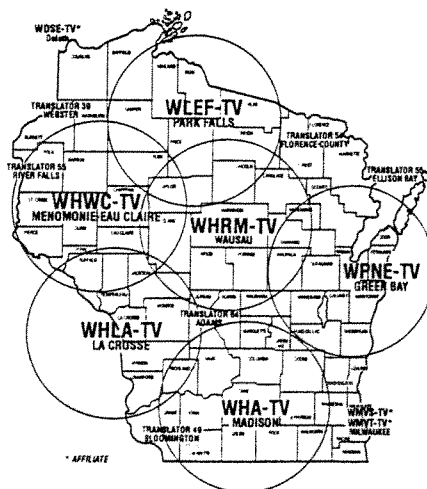
WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO NPR News and Classical Music Network



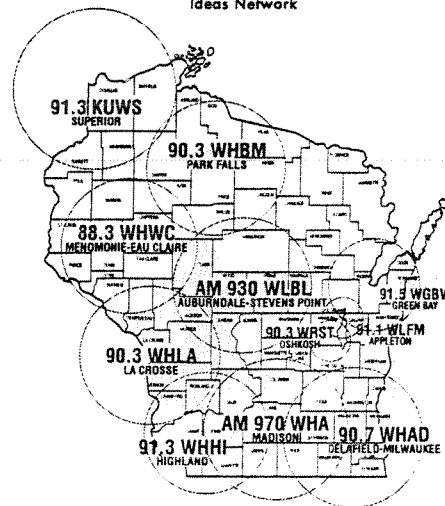
Instructional Television and Radio

- 33,000 Wisconsin teachers in K-12 public schools incorporate instructional television into their curriculum, providing learning opportunities for more than 540,000 students

WISCONSIN PUBLIC TELEVISION



WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO Ideas Network



- Over 100 K-12 instructional television series air annually; more than 20 audio series, including 45 new Wisconsin-produced programs, are broadcast
- 64 mathematics teachers of grades 5 through 8 in 29 Wisconsin school districts are participating in the demonstration year of MATHLINE—a professional development project developed by PBS in collaboration with the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics—which uses computer discussion forums and videoconferences to connect 1,500 teachers in 35 states
- In cooperation with PBS, the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board facilitated the licensing, acquisition, scheduling, and broadcast of 40 telecourses and 43 videoconferences of instructional and professional development courses for the University of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Technical College System
- Satellite Educational Resources Consortium provides student courses and professional development courses for the K-12 system



WISCONSIN EDUCATIONAL
COMMUNICATIONS BOARD

Building a community
Sustaining a public culture
Educating a state
A forum for ideas
and discussion
A standard of excellence and
integrity

Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR) is provided through the cooperation of two licensees operating under the partnership name.

The Wisconsin Educational Communications Board is the licensee for 10 Wisconsin Public Radio stations. The University of Wisconsin-Extension manages six WPR stations licensed to the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin.

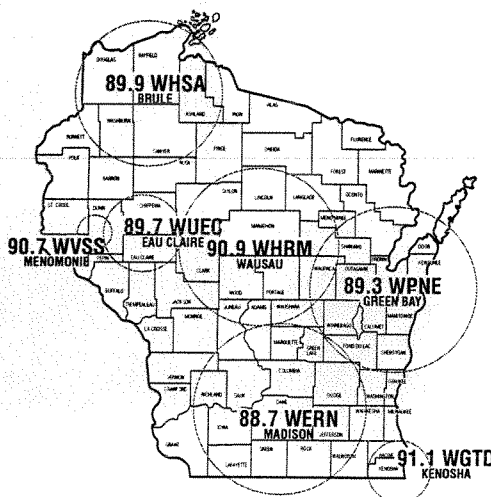
Two affiliated stations, licensed to educational institutions, carry WPR programming.

Collectively, Wisconsin residents listen to more than two million hours of WPR programming weekly.

Wisconsin Public Radio

A service of the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board and the University of Wisconsin-Extension

NPR News and Classical Music Network



Audience Support Statewide

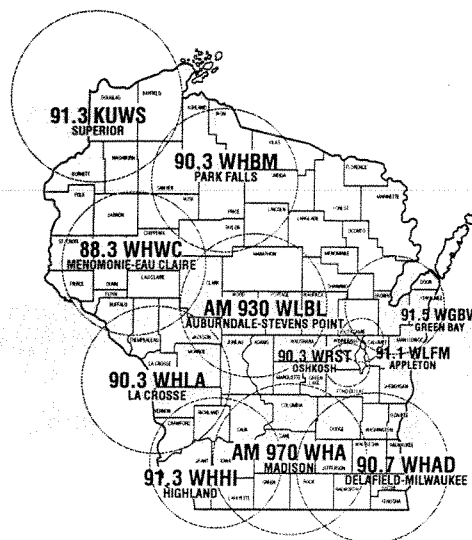
- 280,000 listeners tuned in to Wisconsin Public Radio during an average week in 1994, an increase of 56 percent since 1990
- 36,000 individuals contributed financial support
- \$1.8 million in WPR membership support in 1994
- 50 individuals support WPR through future bequests

Program Underwriting

- \$395,000 in underwriting income for state programming in 1994

The Wisconsin Public Radio Association provides statewide support to both WPR networks.

Wisconsin Ideas Network



Wisconsin Ideas Network

This statewide forum enables listeners to exchange opinions and comments while posing questions to public officials, university faculty, and advocates for a broad range of viewpoints. Programming includes:

- *To the Best of Our Knowledge*
- *University of the Air*
- *Zorba Paster on Your Health*
- *Whad'Ya Know?*
- *Conversations with Tom Clark*
- *Conversations with Jean Feraca*

National Public Radio News and Classical Music Network

News and informational programming, as well as cultural programming, are accessible to residents statewide. Programming includes:

- *Morning Edition*
- *Wisconsin Classical Countdown*
- *All Things Considered*
- *Music from Wisconsin*
- *Simply Folk*
- *A Prairie Home Companion*



WISCONSIN EDUCATIONAL
COMMUNICATIONS BOARD

*Celebrates and connects all
the people of our state*

*Is a free, non-commercial
service that belongs to all
Wisconsin residents*

*Offers programs as diverse
as the people of our state*

*Is a place to grow through
learning*

**Wisconsin Public Television
(WPT)** is provided through
the cooperation of two
licensees.

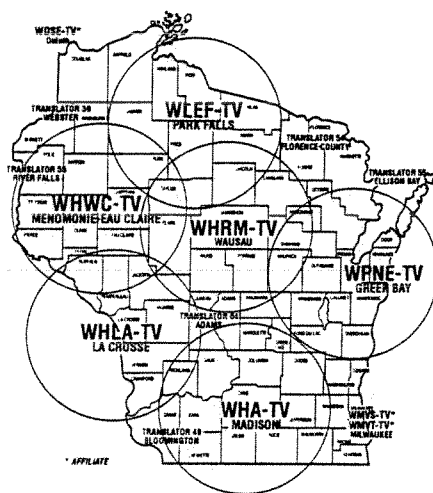
The Wisconsin Educational
Communications Board
(ECB) holds the licenses
of five WPT stations. The
University of Wisconsin-
Extension (UWEX) man-
ages WPT's flagship station,
WHA-TV, which is licensed
to the Board of Regents of
the University of Wisconsin.

Volunteer Organizations

- More than 2,000 volun-
teers provide over 14,000
hours of support yearly
- Friends organizations,
comprised of volunteers,
are involved in fund-
raising activities, on-air
membership drives, and
special events
- Friends of WHA-TV was
founded in 1969
- Friends of Channel 38
in Green Bay was founded
in 1972
- Wausau Friends of Public
Television was founded
in 1991

Wisconsin Public Television

A service of the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board and the University of Wisconsin-Extension



In addition to WPT's system of six
stations, three affiliates and six trans-
lators, more than 185 cable companies
statewide offer WPT programming to
their subscribers.

Viewing Audiences

WHA-TV – South Central Wisconsin

- One of the most-watched television
stations per capita in the country
- 200,000 of the 400,000 viewing
households watch WHA-TV weekly

WPT – Statewide

- One of the highest-ranked services
nationwide, reaching more than one
million viewers each week, whose
demographics reflect the local
population as a whole
- Viewers in 52,000 Wisconsin house-
holds have become members of WPT
through annual donations

Program/Production Sampler

Annual Series

WeekEnd. A live, weekly news and
public affairs series on state issues
and people

Get Real! An award-winning series
that features Wisconsin kids

The PBS Collaborative Project. Prime-
time documentaries on national issues
produced jointly by WPT and other
stations

The Wisconsin Gardener. Advice to
growers in the Upper Midwest

We the People/Wisconsin. Electronic
town hall meetings and debates on issues

Wisconsin Sports. Some 40 UW-Madison
athletic events covered each year

Specials and Documentaries

**Everybody's School: The Challenge
of Change.** A response to legislative
directives for educational reforms

Brave New World. A three-program
series on the interactions and impact of
race, culture and ethnicity on this largely
homogeneous state

**Youth Violence: Looking for Wisconsin
Solutions.** A two-part series produced
as part of the Act Against Violence
Outreach Project designed to find
solutions to youth violence

1998 Wisconsin Sesquicentennial. A
series of programs celebrating the state's
history

Community Outreach Partnerships

Volunteer-A-Thon. Building awareness
of state volunteer programs

**Sesame Street Preschool Education
Program (PEP).** Aimed at child-care
professionals to better prepare children
for school

Act Against Violence Project. WPT
joins with young people, organizations
and agencies to find positive solutions
to youth violence through interactive
outreach efforts; a two-year project

Instructional/Educational Programming

WPT also broadcasts 900 hours during the
school year for K-12 classrooms statewide,
reaching more than 540,000 public school
students annually. In addition, WPT airs
40 telecourses each year, many of which
carry university or technical college
credit, enrolling 5,800 adult learners.



State of Wisconsin \

EDUCATIONAL APPROVAL BOARD \

Joseph L. Davis, Ph.D.
Executive Secretary

Mailing Address:
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Office Location:
310 Price Place
Madison, Wisconsin
FAX (608) 266-1690

PROPOSED AGENCY REORGANIZATION

Issues and Comments

This paper raises a few points regarding the proposed shift of Educational Approval Board functions and staff to the new Department of Education and the replacement of the board itself with an advisory council.

The Educational Approval Board [EAB] is supported only by federal funds and program revenue. It is Wisconsin's "State Approving Agency" managing veterans' education in 220 programs in more than 180 colleges, universities, technical colleges, hospitals, proprietary and career schools and high schools: serving nearly 6,000 veterans. It also oversees for-profit post-secondary schools (serving approximately 15,000 individuals), in-state non-profit post-secondary educational institutions (which began operating after January 1, 1992) and all out-of-state non-profit colleges operating in Wisconsin.

The EAB is attached for administrative purposes to the Wisconsin Technical College System Board [WTCSB] -- it was moved from the Department of Public Instruction in 1971. The proposed reorganization would have an impact on how the agency functions and, in turn, could affect the various educational sectors with which it currently interacts:

- o The EAB deals exclusively with post-secondary education. Most of the proprietary schools offer programs that are available in the Technical College System and support from and interaction with WTCSB staff is extremely valuable in carrying out EAB oversight functions.
- o In states where the State Approving Agency is part of a larger entity, veterans oversight tends to suffer from bureaucratic unresponsiveness -- in addition, approximately 35% of veterans studying under the G.I. Bill are in the Technical College System.
- o The Educational Approval Board has worked hard to establish a collegial relationship with proprietary schools and out-of-state non-profit colleges. It has attempted to balance rigorous oversight with sensitivity to the needs of the institutions and the realities of the marketplace. This responsiveness could be compromised in a larger multi-focused agency.

o The board itself, with policy authority, has provided a healthy real world counterweight to staff oversight activities. This has advanced the overall agency goal of protecting consumers, while keeping educational and training options open, varied and available.

o The EAB has achieved improved cost effectiveness and increased efficiency. Savings (passed on the schools in the form of lower fees) have resulted, primarily, from better utilization of support from WTCSB staff and improved coordination between the two agencies building on the familiarity and trust resultant from the more than twenty year connection.

March 28, 1995



State of Wisconsin

EDUCATIONAL APPROVAL BOARD

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MODIFYING PROCEDURES

Efficiency & Effectiveness

This paper outlines efforts over the past year to modify agency practices and procedures in response to board desires. The message was dual-pronged: to improve efficiency by better utilizing staff resources, capabilities and talents and to prioritize actual oversight tasks to avoid unnecessary work. The guiding spirit of the modifications was to improve relations with schools, while maintaining the board's commitment to rigorous consumer protection.

The following examples reflect the progress which has been made:

1. Site Inspections

For many years, the EAB did rather detailed compliance reviews of various health and safety building code standards. This ensured that students in approved locations would not be subjected to sub-standard learning environments and was important in defining an acceptable baseline for schools to follow. Carrying out the function, however, tended to duplicate work done on a statewide basis by the Division of Buildings & Safety (Department of Industry, Labor & Human Relations) and often set the board at odds with schools over which entity had chief responsibility.

During the past few months, a new working relationship has been established with the Buildings & Safety to have the cognizant state agency do compliance reviews. The arrangement allows for highlighting some areas of concern (e.g., lighting and handicapped access) and reserves to the board the right of final site approval.

It is anticipated that this new arrangement will reduce contention between board staff and schools. It should also free up time during site visits to enable staff to concentrate on other more educationally related tasks.

2. Fiscal & Personnel Support

For much of its history the EAB has relied on internal resources to manage its budget, seek reimbursement from the VA contract and operate a time accounting system (in part to ensure appropriate breakdown between state/VA funded activities). The imposition of indirect cost by the Technical College System Board [WTCSB] a few years ago resulted in potential duplication of effort and underutilized, but paid for, support.

Effective as of the beginning of fall (after some negotiations), WTCSB staff have taken on

a heavier load in support of the EAB: including, reporting to the VA, managing the agency's budget, handling expenditures and staff reimbursements and overseeing all time and leave accounting. This has freed up board staff time for other activities more central to the agency's mission.

3. Computer System & Administration

Until very recently board staff used a stand-alone computer system with administration housed in the EAB. The system was not DOS-based and required a considerable percentage of staff time to keep viable. Moreover, because of past staff changes and other impacts, the system did not have a useable data base: i.e., school information continued to be paper based.

Given the nature of the statutory relationship between the EAB and the WTCSB (and the growing support offered by the latter), it seemed increasingly sensible to reduce a direct drain on EAB staff resources by modernizing the computer system and contracting with WTCSB staff to operate the system.

The result was purchase of a new DOS-based computer system which is served by WTCSB staff. The EAB has been able to develop staff plans without making concession for a percentage of an individual to operate the computer system which will translate into direct support for core functions.

4. Staff Growth & Development

The increased delegation of support functions has provided greater opportunity to rearrange staff responsibilities: in response to out-of-state college oversight (and VA tasks), we have requested an Educational Specialist and a Clerical Assistant. In addition, Joan Fitzgerald, formerly Administrative Assistant, has moved over to the "professional" ranks and works on state approval functions. Nancy Warner, currently Administrative Assistant, will be getting involved in work more directly related to school approvals in pursuit of a reclass.

5. Approvals: Efficiency & Backlog

During the past year (spurred in part by the need to establish clear directions for out-of-state non-profit colleges), staff revised application documents: simplifying them and making them easier to complete. The biggest change was the addition of annotated directions and checklists so that schools did not have to invest unnecessary time in figuring out what they needed to include in order to comply with board requirements.

The lack of such up-front specificity (and directions) contributed to the slow but inexorable growth of an approvals backlog. The new applications mitigate against this concurring again and staff has been making solid headway in dealing with old applications and pending actions. [See Attachment] Staff has placed common sense above absolute compliance: i.e., placing less emphasis on certain compliance items in which the board has shown decreasing interest over the past few years.

6. Forging Stronger Links with the Department of Justice

The Department of Justice is the EAB's enforcement arm. Over the past few years, the board has had almost no formal relationship with DOJ. We have been concerned that the appearance of the lack of follow through could motivate some schools to outright ignore board requirements. This has been the case with the two large out-of-state schools which have had complaints lodged against them ICS and NRI.

We have received good support from DOJ in actively pursuing these recalcitrant schools and are in the process of giving the schools one last change to clean up their acts. If this last relatively collegial appeal fails, we will write up the cases in such a way as to enable DOJ to pursue the schools through appropriate channels.

November 28, 1994



State of Wisconsin

EDUCATIONAL APPROVAL BOARD

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Testimony Before the Joint Committee on Finance

March 28, 1995

I am Marian J. Swoboda, Chair of the Educational Approval Board. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you.

The Educational Approval Board began under Executive Order (as the Educational Advisory Committee) in 1944 as the state approving agency: overseeing veterans' education. Statute codified its role in 1953 and in 1957 the Legislature expanded its authority to include for-profit vocational schools.

The board was attached to the Department of Public Instruction in 1967 and renamed the Educational Approval Board. It was moved from the DPI and attached to the Technical College Board for administrative purposes in 1971. It has remained there ever since. Last year the Legislature gave the board authority over out-of-state non-profit colleges.

The Educational Approval Board is a consumer protection agency. It ensures that veterans receive the quality education they need to make a successful transition to the civilian labor market and also guarantees that consumers can take advantage of the varied training options able to be offered in the for-profit sector with confidence.

We have worked hard to understand the pressures faced by schools; to strike a balance between protecting consumers and ensuring that training opportunities exist. We have advanced for-profit education by ensuring status for the schools, by making them stronger.

Keeping this option viable and stable is important because proprietary schools contribute a great deal to the state's economy by functioning as a second and often third-chance training system -- giving many people who have few options the skills to compete in the job market.

We believe that we have provided solid service -- for-profit schools are in good shape and we've improved how we go about our business. We also believe that one of the reasons why we have been successful is because we are a citizen policy board -- able to temper oversight with real world experience.

You asked me to meet with you today to present testimony on AB 150 and what impact the Bill might have on the agency and its programs. The board's greatest concern is to find assurance that, wherever our function is located, that the individuals we serve continue to receive the same

protection as they have in the past under the Educational Approval Board. We also want to ensure that there remains a viable sector in the state called proprietary or for-profit schools willing and able to serve in an educational sense individuals who might not have opportunities in other educational institutions.

As a example, we need to continually assure that we have the best of drivers behind the wheels of the trucks that cover our highways. And, that is why I have served on this Board for so many years under three governors.



State of Wisconsin \ ELECTIONS BOARD

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March 28, 1995

Kevin J. Kennedy
Executive Director

Honorable Joseph LEEAN, Co-Chair
Honorable Ben BRANCEL, Co-Chair
Members
Joint Legislative Committee on Finance

SUBJECT: Proposed Budget Provisions Affecting State Elections Board

Dear Senator LEEAN, Representative BRANCEL and Committee Members:

The executive budget proposal, 1995 Assembly Bill 150, forces the legislature to re-examine the role the Elections Board plays in the administration of elections. In its present form, the executive budget undermines a long-standing legislative commitment to the disclosure and enforcement of campaign finance law and eviscerates the administrative and technical support available to local election officials, candidates, media and other political registrants.

The mission of the Elections Board is to enhance representative democracy by ensuring the integrity of the electoral process. To achieve this mission, the Elections Board directs its energies toward providing for an informed electorate, both in regard to understanding the election system and to being aware of the activities and finances of candidates for public office. The executive budget proposal does not support this mission.

The Elections Board requested \$115,100 in first-year funding to enhance its computer operations in order to keep pace with the escalating amount of campaign finance information the Board must administer. The budget proposal ignores this request and reduces the amount of staff available to provide services to agency clientele by eliminating one staff position and imposing a campaign registration fee that burdens registrants and adds to the agency workload. The budget proposal also adds a requirement that the Board serve as a monitor of campaign rhetoric to protect the participants in the electoral process from saying mean things to each other.

If the legislature accepts the executive budget proposal as is, the Board will become a repository for an increasing amount of paper which no one, least of all the public, will be able to effectively review. It will also remove any real leadership in the area of election administration for the 1,925 local election officials responsible for administering elections. The end result will undermine the confidence of the electorate in the integrity of the electoral process.

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The Elections Board requests that the Joint Finance Committee amend the agency budget set out in 1995 Assembly Bill 150 to implement the following changes, which will allow the agency to carry out its legislative mission:

1. Provide \$96,600 in first-year funding with continuing funding of \$2,900 in following years to develop electronic filing capabilities for campaign finance documents.
2. Restore the agency staffing level to 14.00 FTE GPR funded positions.
3. Eliminate the proposed filing fee for campaign registrants or develop a fee structure tied to a percentage of campaign disbursements exceeding \$25,000 annually.
4. Eliminate the proposed role of campaign debate monitor.

EXPLANATION

Computerization of Campaign Finance Information

The Elections Board requests \$96,600 in first-year funding to enhance its current computer operations to enable registrants to file information electronically. This is the only way in which the agency will be able to continue to make campaign finance information readily available pursuant to the intent of the legislature when the Campaign Finance law was created. Without this ability, it is extremely difficult for any interested person to sort through the paperwork filed with the Elections Board. Without this resource, the Elections Board staff will not be able to provide more than a cursory review of campaign finance documents to ensure that the disclosure provisions of the law have been met. Without enhanced use of technology, the campaign finance disclosure process will revert to the status that existed when participants in the electoral process filed with the secretary of state's office before 1974.

The proposed computer enhancement has been part of the agency's long-term data processing plan for several years. The Elections Board believes that this is its top priority. Computerization will enable the agency to more effectively serve its clientele.

Maintaining Elections Board Staffing

The budget eliminates one FTE position, whose primary role is to ensure that the Board's information pamphlets and training materials assist candidates, political registrants and local election officials in complying with the law. This means that less assistance is available to volunteer treasurers and local election officials, despite the increasing complexity of the law.

The budget proposal also shifts two positions from GPR funding to program revenue funding. This has two primary impacts: It creates an effective staff reduction because it forces current support staff to spend a minimum of 750 hours administering, processing and collecting the

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fee. The fee also imposes a significant deterrent to participation in the electoral process for the 1,200 registrants filing campaign reports. The fee falls most heavily on those who can least afford it.

Program Revenue Generated by Administrative Fees

The executive budget imposes a \$100 filing fee on all campaign finance registrants with annual campaign activity exceeding \$1,000 in a calendar year. The executive budget office assumes this will generate \$60,000 annually in revenue. The calculations derived by the executive budget office assumptions are erroneous. Relying on their assumptions, the fee would actually generate \$122,000 in annual revenue. However, the assumptions themselves are incorrect because close to one third of the 1,200 registrants do not have activity exceeding \$2,500 in a calendar year. Many registrants never exceeded the \$1,000, and those that did only exceeded \$1,000 once in a two-year period. The projected amount of revenue that is generated should be reduced by approximately one third. This would provide \$80,000 annually in funding.

The difficulty with this fee is that it imposes a premium on participation in the electoral process. There is no relationship between the fee and the administrative burden the registrants' political participation generates. Small political parties and many candidates spend less than \$25,000 in a calendar year for their activity. While active participation by many of these registrants is significant, from the perspective of engendering political debate, it does not unduly burden the administration of elections.

However, registrants with larger campaign finance activity are responsible for generating the large amount of paperwork that frustrates participants and effectively masks disclosure of campaign finance activity. A fee based on the percentage of campaign-related disbursements imposed on registrants whose activity exceeds \$25,000 annually would be a more fair and reliable source of revenue. That fee would generate at least \$140,000 biennially.

However, the proposed fee should be used to make the process serve democracy rather than impair it. This can be done by maintaining current Elections Board staffing levels and designating the initial use of fees for computer enhancements that allow for electronic filing of campaign finance documents with the Elections Board. In subsequent years, the current level of staff positions could be re-examined.

Elections Board as a Campaign Debate Monitor

The executive budget also provides that the Elections Board will be actively involved in monitoring the tenor of campaign debate. The budget permits any candidate for state, local or federal office to file a sworn complaint with the Elections Board alleging that the candidate is a victim of false campaign representation perpetrated by an opponent. The Board must respond to any complaint within 15 days by issuing a statement on the truthfulness of the alleged representation. No action is required on any complaint the Board dismisses as

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without merit. This changes the final arbiter of campaign debate from the ballot box to an administrative agency. It eliminates considerations of due process by requiring an expedited determination during the heat of a campaign.

This recommendation had been the subject of a Legislative Council study in 1981. The ultimate effect of that study was the unstated conclusion, reinforced by three state supreme court decisions over the years, that the campaign arena is the best forum for addressing candidates' concerns about their opponents' statements. The more egregious cases can be addressed by the judicial system.

On behalf of the Elections Board and its staff, I thank you for your consideration of our requests.

STATE ELECTIONS BOARD


Kevin J. Kennedy
Executive Director

KJK:dl

U/K/BUDGET/3_27_95 (LegisCommFin)

TO: Wisconsin Joint Committee on Finance - 1995

FROM: J. Curtis McKay, State Elections Board

SUBJECT: Objectives, Status and Operations - Election Board

Dear Senators and Representatives:

My sincere thanks to this Committee and its co-chairs for an opportunity to comment on the proposed state budget and its impact on the State Elections Board, and to share with you some observations I have made over the last twenty years as a member or observer of this state agency. Let me take up the last matter first, since I believe it is of paramount importance.

Since the early 1970's, when the State Election Board was created (1973), the laws and Administrative Rules (which stand as legislation), that ordinary political volunteers must know and comply with have grown and grown in sophistication and complexity.

It is "Preaching to the Choir" to remind this Committee how difficult it is to recruit functionaries, especially treasurers and candidates, to our traditional voluntary political parties. A viable local or state voluntary Party which used to be the touchstone of Wisconsin politics have dramatically declined in number and effectiveness.

The broad base of interest, philosophy and approaches to government, in the two party system, has been as important in the maintenance of our republican system of government as the separation of powers concept, and has served to minimize corruption with their diverse interests.

After our twenty year attempt to intrude and manipulate the process by which our citizens reach their own conclusion and cast their votes, we find ourselves more suspect and concerned with highly particularized "special interest" groups threading their way through loop holes and fashioning novel structures to disproportionately influence government than we did when we started the regulation process.

In that same period we have "run off" volunteer participants in the political process and rendered the two party system all but impotent.

Our announced purpose for the election supervision in Chap. 11, is to assist in building an "INFORMED" electorate, encourage the "BROADEST POSSIBLE" participation in the election process and its financing, create a requirement of "FULL DISCLOSURE" by candidates and their supporters, all in the interest of providing data to help our citizens draw their own conclusions on voting.

All of these objectives are appropriate services for a government to provide in aid to it's totally competent citizens. It is "servant" data gathering to facilitate, not restrict, the decision making of independent, fully cognitive, free citizens.

Our mistake was to fall victim to the paternalistic predisposition that plagues all government and to intrude into subjective determinations that should always be reserved to the citizen body. We decided that government or its bureaucracy would determine what is or is not "excessive" spending and have been chasing our tail ever since to "define" it and to "control" it, all to the detriment of citizen participation in the election process.

This Committee and our Legislature can save money, limit bureaucratic growth and alleviate biennial torment over the "next set of election law corrections" if we will but return to INFORMING the electorate through required and truthful DISCLOSURE of the expenditures and level of spending by sponsors of each candidate. If the voters choose to vote for a candidate who has taken contributions from "Embezzlers Anonymous", and they know it, perhaps they have found a redeeming characteristic that favors their selection. The last few elections have suggested just that has happened more than once.

"And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor". I submit this statement would permit, not punish, the ten dollar contribution that exceeded 45% of the 65% of the arbitrary limit set by a legislative body.

BUDGET BILL: As to the treatment of the Board under the proposed State Budget, there are three areas upon which I would offer comment.

\$100 FEE: The Election Board takes about \$20,000 per year in forfeitures and fines from hapless election participants. This is not "program revenue" for the Board. It goes to the Common School Fund. We have about 1200 registrants in the Election Board office each year. About one third of these registrants would have expenditures below the \$1000 threshold. A substantial number of other registrants, perhaps 10%, would exceed the threshold but be below \$2000, which could hardly be considered an all out push to control Wisconsin's elections. If all registrants continued as they are now, one could expect a program revenue of around seventy to eighty thousand dollars. Half would be lost in administration expense.

You may rest assured that registrants will not continue "as they are now". Many will see the \$100 registration fee as an opening deterrent to registering and will drop out.

The fee impacts unfairly and is counter-productive to our announced objective to "...encourage the BROADEST POSSIBLE participation...of our citizens... in the electoral process. Please amend the \$100 registrations fee out of the Bill or increase the threshold to \$10,000.

ADDED PERSONNEL: On the funding of the "information and training specialist, I believe that if the Legislators here today would help refocus our task and shift mind-sets to objective data gathering for voter use, the resulting simplification of the Election Laws would solve the additional personnel request. In any event, the State and the Election Board can live without a "training specialist" during these trying economic times.

FALSE REPRESENTATION ADJUDICATION: This proposed change to the Election Board is not a good idea. First, it would require a "sum sufficient" appropriation to get started. Second, I can't believe any agency could meet the adjudicative "due process" test in fifteen days, even with a staff of hundreds. Third, there is the District Attorney route and the civil action redress, already available. Fourth, and most important, carrying out the charge would be all but impossible, so enforcement would suffer. Unenforced laws make the law and ass and has historically encouraged revolution. This provision, on the basis of common sense, should be promptly amended out of the Bill.

Thank you very much for your time and attention to these remarks. I hope there is something in these comments that will help in your deliberations. That is my sincere desire.

Thank you.



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Cheryl L. Parrino, Chairman
Scott A. Neitzel, Commissioner

Jacqueline K. Reynolds, Executive Assistant
Lynda L. Dorr, Secretary to the Commission
Steven M. Schur, Chief Counsel

Formal Joint Finance Remarks on Public Service Commission's 1995-97 Biennial Budget Request as Reflected in AB 150.

Cheryl L. Parrino, Chairman
March 28, 1995

Good Morning. I am Cheryl Parrino, Chairman of the Public Service Commission. I am here today to both answer any questions you may have about our budget request, or other policy matters and to register my support of Governor Thompson's proposed budget AB 150 as it relates to the Public Service Commission. My formal remarks are brief:

I am pleased with several decisions on our budget. One in particular is the approval of our stray voltage program request. For the last several bienniums, the PSC and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection have attempted to resolve farmer stray voltage problems on a case by case, farm by farm basis. This method has meant that only a few dozen farms each year can have the testing done by the stray voltage team. The changes will allow us to reach more farms and will stress compliance with standard, appropriate testing procedures across all utilities and education for those who investigate stray voltage.

The Governor has proposed a transfer of the high-level Radioactive Waste Disposal Review Functions to the PSC. The PSC will fold this into our federal intervention activities. Given the general lack of progress in this area it may be years before there may be a need to involve several agencies again in this effort. We will shepherd the very limited activities until then.

Finally, I am very happy that the Governor's budget proposal has included funding for information technology initiatives and provided approval for eventual funding of two important information technology initiatives; the geographical information system and the electronic filing of annual utility reports. I am especially pleased that the Governor has provided funding for one video conferencing site in our hearing room. This will allow us the ability to increase public participation in our hearings and meetings.